



Representative Mark Fraizer
Ohio's 71st House District

Representative Phil Plummer
Ohio's 40th House District

Sponsor Testimony, HB 475

Chairman LaRe, Vice Chair White, Ranking Member Leland and members of House Criminal Justice Committee, thank you for hearing HB 475, a bill to add police officers who are employed by a hospital's police force to the definition of 'Peace Officers' in section 2935.01 of the ORC. This issue was brought to our attention when a hospital patient assaulted a police officer employed by a Dayton-Area hospital, and was not charged with first degree felonious assault. As fully-trained and certified police officers by the Secretary of State, hospital police officers are considered 'peace officers', but because they are not expressly defined in ORC section 2935.01, it is often difficult for prosecutors to treat them with the same protections as department police in court. It should be noted that this legislation would not grant peace officer protections to private security guards or any non-certified police officers. It only seeks to clarify for prosecutors what all police officers are protected under Ohio law.

HB 421 from the 133rd GA:

The original draft of HB 475 includes language from HB 421, of the 133rd GA. This bill provided immunity from civil or criminal liability in any action brought under Ohio law, if an action arises out of a duly appointed hospital police officer who is acting in the discharge of their duties. This language was a section that was amended into another piece of legislation earlier this GA, and will be duplicative in the event of this bill's passage. For this reason, Rep. Plummer and I are only speaking to the addition of hospital police, and special police officers to apply to the offense of felonious assault. We would like the committee to anticipate an amendment due to the actions of the House Civil Justice Committee, to correct the ORC sections originally intended.

Hospitals can be tense, highly stressful workplaces not only for medical professionals, but also for those who protect and serve patients and staff. HB 475 would provide the same protections to hospital and special purpose police that we provide all other police in state. Thank you chairman LaRe, Vice Chair White, Ranking member Leland, and members of the House Criminal Justice committee. We would be happy to answer any questions on the legislation.